Held

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by twilight_shades

Summary

Sequel to Fascinate. Will’s a banshee, Hannibal’s a wendigo, and there’s trouble on the moors.

Notes

I didn't plan to write this. I thought Fascinate was a complete one-off. But I got an idea about Will finding something on the moors and that idea just took off.

Disclaimer: Do not own. Complete fiction.

See the end of the work for more notes

Will wakes up with his banshee senses screaming at him. It's never been like this, and it's never been so strong. It's like he can feel death all around him, but he can't see it. Will tries to pinpoint where it's coming from, but he can't. He realizes he's shaking. He reels himself in and centers. He tunes that part of himself out, until he can focus. But then whatever it was that caught at his senses is sliding slowly away, like it's never been. It's one of the strangest things he's ever felt.

There's a fleeting thought of Hannibal having something to do with it, but no, it just doesn't fit. However, it's probably not a coincidence either, given it's been less than two weeks since he showed up. Hannibal has always had power, human or not. Some beings have a magnetic pull, many others that come into their sphere are immediately drawn to them, though a few don't feel anything and a few are repelled. Now that he's fully wendigo, his power will naturally draw both humans and other supernaturals.

Will takes a deep breath and concentrates fully on that which connects him to death. He is always a banshee, but he doesn't often extend the full range of his senses. Firstly, because there are always deaths and if there are a lot of people nearby, there will be a lot that he can sense and that can be overwhelming. Secondly, when he does it, he always feels a strong impulse to wail, which isn't really conducive to keeping supernatural goings on secret (a few times, when it has been very windy, he has let loose a wail or two, when humans can tell themselves it's just the wind howling). There's something, but it's slipping away, like a dream you can't quite remember. There's suddenly another different point that flares brightly to his banshee senses and it has a location he can find and a familiar feel to it – Hannibal.

Will gets up. He takes some time getting dressed and ready. He's distracted. Plus, it's pretty early in the morning. But soon enough he's off and headed toward where he felt Hannibal. He hadn't known where Hannibal had been staying. Hannibal has come over each day after that first day and asked Will to dine with him at the small (very expensive and exclusive) restaurant a few streets over from Will's. Will has accepted three times. They had only lightly touched on their previous history during their first meal, Hannibal informing Will that Hannibal will be taking his time with his making of amends, being careful and deliberate, because it is important and worthy of the effort and he wants Will to truly believe that he means it. They had discussed a fair few things during their subsequent meals, but Hannibal hadn't offered where he'd been staying and Will hadn't asked.

Hannibal looks surprised to find Will at his door, but he also looks a little pleased, even though it looks like he's not quite finished with his breakfast and he doesn't like to be interrupted during a meal.

"Anyone I know?" Will asks sardonically.

"Doubtful."

Will shakes his head and sighs a little.

Hannibal regards him with a slight smile. "I know your tastes are not mine, but I would very much like to cook you a meal someday. Your favorite."

“Kraken is amazing,” Will says dryly, his dark sense of humor getting the better of him, making him want to play a little. Kraken is very tasty, but it’s very rare as krakens are very hard to kill, so most meals that serve kraken are after battle with one where some part got sliced off.

Hannibal peers at him keenly, a suspicious look on his face. But he doesn’t pursue it. “And what may I do for you, my dear Will?”

“You killed recently?” It’s just barely a question.

“You felt that?” Hannibal asks, eyes intent on Will.

Will waves that away. “Did you feel anything just before?”

Hannibal seems a bit taken aback, like maybe he expected Will to disapprove.

Hannibal is a wendigo and he’s made his deal with the Council, as long as he sticks to it, doesn’t kill any innocents, Will isn’t going to make a fuss. “Maybe ten, fifteen minutes before?”

“I was rather focused on what I was doing, but let me think about it,” Hannibal says.

Will nods.

After a few moments, Hannibal holds up a finger. “There was this… thrum in air. I believe that I attributed it to my own excitement, but thinking back, it seemed more like it was from without than within.”

“Hmm.” That could mean something, but Will’s not sure what.

“Is something the matter?”

“Yes.”

“What is it?”

“I don’t know.” Will sighs. If he can’t figure this out, he may have to contact the local coven. Now, he’s met some very nice magic-users and he personally knows of at least two covens that are lovely and boons to their local communities, however most covens he’s come into contact with have been a complete nightmare to deal with – condescending, evasive, and officious.

“Is someone causing you trouble?” Hannibal inquires, expression hardening.

“Not… directly.” Will thinks about how the feeling had slid away. “And it seems as if they may be doing their damnedest to keep me out of it.”

“You will let me know if that changes,” Hannibal says, nearly an order.

“Why? So you can kill them?” Will asks, perversely amused.

“If necessary. It is, after all, part of my deal.”

Will concedes that with a nod.

“But if you were to be hurt, it wouldn’t matter if there was a deal or not, it wouldn’t matter if my actions would cause the Council to come after me, I would mete out to the transgressor the most gruesome reprisal I could imagine and I can be *terribly* imaginative,” Hannibal says with a dark smile.

There’s a tiny part of Will that thinks that that’s almost sweet, so he founders a bit. “That’s, uh, I don’t think, I’m not that important.”

Hannibal reaches out and brushes a couple of fingers down Will’s cheek. “Oh, my dear Will, yes, you are.”

And maybe, to Hannibal, he is. He thinks maybe he thought that Hannibal did not really see *him*, but more of a collection of, well, fascinating things, like his powers and his mind. But now, Will thinks maybe it’s him, all of Will, the good bits, the bad bits, the bits Hannibal has yet to discover, that fascinates him. It’s sort of flattering and terrifying all at once. He panics a bit. “I have to go. I’ll let you finish your… yeah.”

Hannibal looks curious, but all he says is, “Take care of yourself, Will.”

Will nods and leaves.

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Will tosses and turns and doesn’t get much sleep at all. He goes through his morning in a daze. He lies down for a nap after lunch. He wakes up, sitting bolt upright, heart pounding. He gets up and pulls on something warm and goes out. He’s out on the local moorland and walking. He doesn’t know where he’s going, but he feet are swift and do not falter, though he walks for a very long time. He can’t see anything, but he knows when he gets near. He crests a small mound and gasps.

It looks like he won’t be contacting that local coven after all. He swallows. All thirteen are laid out, one body in the center, the rest in a circle around it, like hour marks on an analog clock, the life force drained from them, the bodies barely husks. It looks particularly surreal in the afternoon sunlight. He walks over closer to them and tries to see their deaths, tries to see the why of it, but he is not surprised that his mind is clouded. Someone went to great pains here, of course they occluded it with magic. But there’s something else. He crouches down and slowly reaches out a hand, dreading what he’ll find. The second his hand touches the ground, he starts to wail, he can’t help it. Even after he stops, the echo of it seems to go on forever. And he stays there, crouched. It's a long time before he looks up again.

When he does look up, Dan MacInerney, a local Council member is there looking around in shock. “Oh, Jesus, Sheila Kay,” he says when he gets to the body at what Will is thinking of as the eight o’clock mark.
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Will'd met with Dan a couple of times since coming here, he's a bluff, friendly bauchan, with a smile for everybody. Will hates to have to tell him. "There's more, underground."

Dan looks alarmed. "Another coven?"

"Oh, no. More bodies, though."

"Human?"

Will goes to say yes, but then pauses. That doesn't feel right. "Not quite."

Dan looks confused. "I'm sorry, I'm not sure what that means."

"They were descendents, seven of them. About to manifest."

Dan looks at him in surprise.

Will can understand that. Generally you are either human or supernatural, no in-between. You can become supernatural through certain actions (as a wendigo or a werewolf). But most beings are born, not made. Even with genetic intermingling with humans, human or supernatural is usually set from birth. Anyone with at least an eighth supernatural blood can be born supernatural, but if they are born human they usually stay human. However, a rare few will manifest later in life, appear human, be human for all intents and purposes (if one of these people gets bitten by a werewolf, that can lead to some very strange anomalies). And as a person gets close to manifesting, it can sometimes be sensed. But it is rare, manifesting. And seven, all about to manifest, exceedingly rare. Will shrugs at Dan, at a loss to explain.

"This is what I'm thinking it is, right?"

"Sacrifice," Will feels sick even saying it.

"Dear Lord."

"Sorry about wailing," Will says with a grimace, knowing it will bring humans and supernaturals out on the moors.

Dan shakes his head. "No, I understand. The Council will figure something out. You'll let us know if you find anything more, information or anything?"

"Of course," Will says.

Dan gets out his phone and calls someone, walking so he's out of earshot, but can still keep an eye on the scene.

Will stares at the ground, his hand still touching it, still feeling beneath it. He starts and finally pulls away when someone lays a hand on his shoulder and softly calls his name. Will looks up to find Hannibal there.

"You are back now? You were right here and you felt so far away."

Will gives a humorless smile. “I was. Far away.” Death is always far away, and close at the same time. “What are you doing here?”

“I heard you. Your wail. I felt it.”

“You felt it?”

“Down to my bones, like it was a part of me.”

Will cocks his head. That’s odd. He’s heard of that with other banshees, but it only happens when they are wailing for that person’s death, predicting it. Will cannot predict death like that, his wail was for these people already dead, not Hannibal, Hannibal should not have felt it. What is going on here?

“Will, do you need to be here?” Hannibal asks.

“What? Oh, no, the local Council will handle it.” Will looks over to Dan and is surprised that Brenda Nix and Lyle Abbott from the Council have already joined him. He wonders when that happened, he hadn’t noticed it at all.

“Let me walk you home then.”

“Uh, okay. Just let me let Dan know.” Will goes over and tells Dan that he can call with any questions and that Will’s available to talk to anyone they want to bring in to investigate. Dan thanks him and wishes him farewell.

Will and Hannibal walk back toward Will’s place. It’s silent for most of the way.

Hannibal breaks the silence when they are almost back. “Of course I don’t think you killed those people, but may I ask why there was no suspicion from the others? I did a fair bit of research into banshees, once I knew, but I don’t recall coming across anything about banshees being above suspicion.”

“We are connected to death and it would… show, at least for a while. With this many deaths, for a very long while.”

“I don’t recall you looking any differently when you killed Hobbs,” Hannibal says.

“Don’t you?”

Hannibal is quiet for a few moments. “You did seem sharper and more agitated. Your eyes seemed darker. The way you regarded things reminded me of a bird.”

“A crow.”

“Yes!” Hannibal exclaims, looking like he’s had a revelation. “Ah, I see. So, it is noticeable enough for those that are aware to know.”

Will nods.

Evening is coming on as they get to Will's place and the wind starts to kick up. Hannibal says, "Perhaps you can tell me more about those people tomorrow," as they get to the door.

That's when Will realizes that he hadn't told Hannibal what it meant or anything about it and that Hannibal hadn't asked. "Oh, I can tell you about it right now, if you want to come in."

Hannibal regards him for a second and says, "No, I think it can wait until after you've had a good night's sleep, something I don't think will be helped by the level of detail you will probably have to go into to explain it fully to me."

"Thoughtful."

"I can be. Good night, Will. I wish you peaceful slumber," Hannibal says and gives a short bow before turning and leaving. Will watches after him for a few seconds before going into the house.

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Will does actually get a good night's sleep, able to push everything out of his head and not even dream about it. It's when he wakes up that thoughts about what might be going on plague him. He pulls out an older grimoire and bookmarks the section on ritual sacrifice (it's in Middle English, but still pretty explicable), a scathing account of a necromancer from a 17th century European Council (not quite on point, but related), and a rather dry, but factual report from a South American congregation of covens about magic use and the gathering of magical power. He puts them in a box and has them couriered over to Hannibal along with a note telling him that these will give him some background and which parts are particularly relevant. Will gets a call from Hannibal soon afterwards to thank him. Hannibal suggests that they meet later so that he can return everything to Will once he's done studying it and so that Will can answer any lingering questions Hannibal might have. Will agrees and they decide that Hannibal will come over to Will's place in the late afternoon.

Will decides on a walk after lunch, before Hannibal's visit. He looks out over the moorland in the direction where he'd found the bodies. He can't see anything from this distance. He knows the Council has set up glamours and a cover story of an archaeological dig to explain the activity around the site. The day is overcast and there's a heavy feeling in the air that Will wants to attribute to an oncoming storm, but he can't quite. He turns and heads down along the coast. The stretch that he picks doesn't seem to have anybody else and it feels desolate. Will misses his dogs. A dog or two (or five) as companions would be welcome, especially with as much walking as he has been doing.

The terrain he's walking along is a little uneven and rocky so he's watching his step pretty closely. All of a sudden there's rush of birds, seemingly out of nowhere. They seem panicked, noisy and moving erratically. Will ducks down out of the way and places a foot wrong, which sends him crashing to the rock-strewn ground. He stays down for a few moments and then slowly sits up as the last of the flock wings away. He gets up off the ground painfully, blinking and a little dizzy. He feels grimy, dirt on his clothes. His left knee feels bruised, maybe wrenched and his left palm and wrist are pretty abraded. As he starts to limp back, he wonders if the birds were an omen. It's possible, but it's also possible they were disturbed by whoever is causing all the strife, birds can be very sensitive to that kind of thing. He makes
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his way to the house, his limp is almost gone and the skin on his wrist and palm is mostly healed, but his cheek is stinging. It's bleeding a little. He doesn't remember hitting his face, but he must have and pretty badly too for it to take this long healing. He grimaces. He hopes no one saw anything that looked too gory.

Hannibal is waiting for him at his door. Will is startled, apparently it's later than he thought. Hannibal looks startled himself, staring intently at his face. He reaches up an brushes a thumb over the stinging place on Will's cheek and asks, "What happened?"

"Bar fight," Will says wryly.

Hannibal blinks then gives a short laugh.

Will unlocks the door and lets them both in. He turns to Hannibal and catches him licking his thumb. Licking Will's blood off his thumb, and closing his eyes like he's savoring it. Will takes breath to say something about it, but stops and reconsiders, not something he wants to get into right now. Instead he says, "Give me a few minutes to get cleaned up and I'll be with you."

Hannibal eyes him up and down and says, "Take your time."

Will sees why when he catches sight of himself in a mirror in the bathroom. High on his cheek, the skin's torn with a dark bruise underneath – he must have actually broken the cheekbone, probably gave himself a concussion. There's grit in his hair and on the side of his face. The cuff of his left sleeve is a little bloody. There's grit and dirt down his left side that he'd noted when he'd gotten up, but had forgotten to do anything about. He sighs and dusts himself off a little, shakes out his hair and then washes his hands. He goes to his bedroom and grabs some clean clothes and then goes back to the bathroom. He sheds his outer layers and then runs a comb through his hair, then wets his hair and runs the comb through again. His hair ends up looking neater than it usually does. He runs a washcloth over his face and washes his hands again. He checks his knee, just a hint of fading bruising. His hand and wrist are completely healed. He pulls on some soft, loose pants and a soft too-large flannel button-down. He checks the mirror and his cheek still sports a bruise, but it's blue fading into brown at the edges, not black or deep purple, and the skin is smooth again.

Hannibal looks up when Will comes into the living room. Hannibal studies his cheek and says "Your healing is faster than I thought."

"Well, I did suppress it a lot around you."

"Yes, I did guess that. Later." Hannibal looks at him with curiosity and asks, "How long can you suppress it?"

"Depends on the injuries, my state of mind, and the circumstances. I think the longest I've ever done it was long enough for a broken bone to heal on a human schedule."

"You must be able to endure a great deal of injury, then?" Hannibal asks, looking disturbingly intrigued.

Will edges away from Hannibal. “I don’t *like* it.”

“Relax, Will, I would never want to cause you serious injury.”

Will looks at him incredulously.

“Anymore. As I have explained, before I knew the wholeness of you, I had some regrettable lapses in judgment. Have I not been assiduous in my efforts at atonement?”

“Well, you haven’t tried to kill me or sent anyone else after me recently.”

“Surely you know I’ve done more to court y-, your forgiveness.”

Will frowns a little at Hannibal’s unusual verbal stumble. And, yes, Hannibal’s been talking to him, learning about him, encouraging Will to use him as a sounding board, being generally helpful and supportive, though Will can’t quite shake the impression of a predator waiting patiently for the right moment to capture its prey. “I am aware of your fascination, but I’m not quite sure if your intention is to devour me or… devour me.”

Hannibal tsks. “Will, the world would be a much poorer place for not having you in it. You have a singular mind. Why would I want to deprive myself of your presence?”

“Sometimes instincts overwhelm intellect.”

“True. But Will, as much as I am fascinated with you, I have come to care about you, and that is not something I can say about many people. I do wish to keep you from serious harm, even if it means I must protect you from my own instincts.”

“You seem sincere, but you are a very good liar.”

“Hmm. It is something I cultivated. I must say, though, you too are quite practiced in the art of deception.”

“I suppose my house does have an awful lot of glass,” Will says with a rueful smile.

“And that house with its glass is beautiful.”

Will clears his throat and changes the subject, “So, you had questions?”

“Oh, no, I think I understand. Sacrifices can bring someone power, sacrifices of groups, more power, and linked groups, especially those linked for the specific purpose of pooling power, even more power. But sacrificial power is always tainted by the deliberate taking of a life, unless that life is freely and willingly given up. The information you sent over was very helpful.” Hannibal points to the book and papers on Will’s table.

Will blinks at them. He must have really been out of it when he got back to have missed Hannibal carrying them. “Essentially, yes.”

“Ah, I did have one question. I’m guessing that cults have been used to this purpose, yes? Would that qualify as freely?”

“Yes, many cults that have ended in suicide have had someone there to try to reap the power. As to freely given, well, sometimes. It depends on belief. If the person who convinces them truly believes, then, yes. If they are deceived, it depends a little on the amount of deception, but generally, no. And apparently that can be a very hard thing to judge.”

“Very interesting. I don’t suppose you have any ideas about why someone is looking to gather so much power.”

“No, not really.”

“Well, nonetheless, my day has been very enlightening.”

Will gives a wry smile. “I’m glad it’s worked out for someone.”

“Darling Will, have you not enjoyed our repartee?”

“Possibly.”

Hannibal smiles delightedly at him. “I shall take my leave, then.” And Hannibal does, but not before cupping Will’s face carefully and brushing his lips lightly, but lingeringly, over the cheek that has likely long cleared of its bruise.

Will sits in his living room for a long time afterward, thinking, his hand absently going to his cheek from time to time.

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Will’s walking back after a meeting with the Council (lots of theories and speculation, no real progress either from him or them). He’s distracted, but a sudden gust of wind has him feeling like he should be paying attention to his surroundings. There’s a sensation of eyes on him, though he can’t find a source. Which probably means someone is deliberately obscuring themselves from him. He is not terribly surprised to feel a rush of something slithering and malevolent wash over him as his vision goes dark.

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Will wakes up, chained to a bed, with iron. He sighs, apparently anything can get old. There is the feel of death all around, in the room, but mostly soaked into a figure standing in the shadows. Will can tell it’s a strigoi. Oh, that would explain the birds on the beach, strigoi are related to strix. No wonder it kept itself concealed (they do have a particular talent for concealment), Will would’ve recognized its kind right away, although they are rare. And if its victims had been children or a particular family, a strigoi would’ve been at the top of a suspect list, even though they are generally powerful enough that they don’t feel the need to seek more. Going after a coven, it must have desperately wanted that power, as covens tend to be able to sense and destroy strigoi.

“Killing me won’t get you much extra power,” Will says to the figure.

A garbled voice says, “Oh, I’m not going to kill you, not yet at least.”

Will takes a moment to think about that. “I’m bait?”

“Yes.”

Will believes he knows why. “For Hannibal.”

“Hmm. You are quick. Yes. He used my fascination against me, now I will use his against him.” The figure steps into the light and it’s a man with a terribly disfigured face, though he shifts into a man with an attractive face as Will watches.

“Did he…” Will asks, gesturing with limited motions to his own face. He grimaces as the iron restraining his wrists really starts to burn.

“Yes, he did,” the strigoi makes odd sucking sound as he answers.

“Huh.” Strigoi have pretty formidable healing powers and that was a lot of damage from the glimpse he got.

“I can see you’re wondering how he did it. He found a way to get me to do it to myself.”

That explains it, especially if the strigoi cast a spell during or used a bespelled object. “That’s why you were after power, so you could destroy Hannibal.”

Somehow, the smile on that handsome face looks more disfiguring than any scar ever could. “Yes. You are quite something, Will Graham. Maybe I’ll keep you around for a while. You are very pretty and I’ll bet your blood is delicious.”

“Mr., uh, …?”

“Verger, Mason Verger.”

“Hannibal’s going to kill you.” There is no doubt in Will’s mind.

“We shall see. I think you should give your cry now, get him here as soon as possible.”

Will gives him a skeptical look.

“Or I could just kill beings right in front of you until you do. I have a couple of Council members in the next room and I can get more.”

Will does not think he’s bluffing. He takes a deep breath, feels death, feels it clinging to Verger, and starts to wail. He stops, though he feels like he could do it for a very long time.

They wait. Verger watches him, shifting between his scarred visage and the handsome one. Will’s not sure why. Will’s fists are starting to clench up from the pain of the iron right on his skin. He’s not sure if he can truly blame Hannibal for this, he obviously didn’t know what Verger actually was and he’s betting that besides the face, Hannibal tried to kill him. Disfiguring his face like that means that Hannibal really didn’t like him, which means he shouldn’t have been long for the world. Unfortunately, strigoi are hard to kill. However, that doesn’t mean they can’t be killed. Many beings would go out of their way, band together with

others they are feuding with, to kill strigoi. If not for their affinity for camouflaging themselves, strigoi would've long been eradicated. Not even their sort of cousins, vampires, like them.

There is a whisper of sound and Hannibal is there. "Mason, what an interesting surprise. I thought you were dead. But it appears that, like the rest of us in this room, you weren't quite what you seemed. Then again, perhaps you were exactly what you seemed, I just didn't realize there was a supernatural explanation for it." Hannibal lets his eyes slide over Will. "Are you well, Will?"

"Been better. Been a lot worse, though," Will says stoically. The iron is starting feel like someone is has heated the metal of the cuffs to red hot.

"He's fine, for now," Verger says, pulling Hannibal's attention. Verger drops the handsome face completely.

"Oh, dear, that is rather severe," Hannibal says, studying Verger's face. He doesn't sound sorry.

"I will do worse to you. Then I will hold you here and make you watch as I play with your precious Will. Then I will bleed you dry, but not before telling you all the other things I intend to do to him."

"Really, Mason, must you be so crass?"

Verger lets out a gravelly inarticulate cry of rage and attacks Hannibal. He is very strong and very fast, but so is Hannibal. The fight is brutal, the blows harsh and swift. It ranges all around the room. Will hisses as they bump into the bed, jostling his cuffs.

"Will, how do I kill him?" Hannibal asks, breathing hard and ducking a blow that punches a hole through the wall.

The pain is blurring Will's mind, but he pushes it aside. "Uh, fire, until he burns to ashes." Will doesn't think there's anything in the room Hannibal could use. "Oh, beheading. Beheading will work. That's it, as far as I know."

Hannibal's eyes go keen and he smiles, deeply and darkly. "Thank you, Will." Then Hannibal bites down into Verger's neck, blood spraying. Verger screams and Hannibal keeps biting.

Will closes his eyes, but he can still hear the tearing of flesh, Verger's screams and then gurgles, and then nothing but a chewing meaty sound. Will feels nauseated from both it and the agony he's in. It seems like it takes forever for all sound to cease.

"Will, you can open your eyes now," Hannibal says calmly.

There's blood all down Hannibal's clothes, but it looks like he's wiped his face of the worst of it. Will's clenching his teeth, pretty sure he's going to start screaming soon.

Hannibal looks at him, concerned now. "Will, did he hurt you?"

“The cuffs are iron,” Will says, breathless with pain.

Hannibal looks around, but then comes over and just starts prying the cuffs from Will’s wrists. Will tries not to make any noise, but whimpers escape. Finally, he’s free, he holds up his wrists from touching anything and frantically backs away from the iron. Hannibal wraps his arms around Will’s chest, dragging his back up against Hannibal’s chest and pulling Will away from the bed, not touching his arms. The skin that was under the cuffs looks like a third degree burn. Will slumps fully back into Hannibal, dizzy. He still hurts, but it isn’t the ever escalating torture it was. Will takes in a shaky breath and becomes aware that Hannibal is murmuring something in his ear.

“Shh, Will, I’ve got you, you’re okay, you’ll be okay. I’m sorry, I didn’t know. You will be okay. He’ll never touch you again.”

“Yeah, I know. I will be okay,” Will says. He’s not sure how convincing it is, given how he’s shaking. He can see a bit of muscle and sinew on the floor near his foot. He sighs. “Hannibal, how many people have you killed?”

Hannibal’s arms tighten a bit and he’s silent at Will’s back for a long moment. “Do you really want to know?”

Will thinks about how powerful Hannibal is. “No, I suppose not.”

“I have had some willingly and freely given lives, if that makes you feel better.”

Will is surprised, but he’s not sure he should be. Hannibal has always been compelling. “It does, a little.”

“I am sorry, about Mason.”

“You didn’t know. Strigoi are very good at hiding themselves.”

Hannibal nuzzles at Will’s hair, before saying quietly into his ear, “I believe you’re going to have to give me a crash course in the supernatural. I have done research, but it seems to have barely scraped the surface. I need to know of anything that could be a threat to you.”

“To me?”

“To you, Will. I knew when I heard your wail, it was something more than a death you’d found. You sounded worried and warning and I knew you were in danger. I do not like you in danger. I cannot stand you in danger anymore, I think,” Hannibal says, his tone somber.

“I knew you would kill him.”

“I can’t decide if that’s a compliment or not.”

“Eh.”

Hannibal gives a low chuckle. “Oh, Will, Mason was grievously wrong about many things, but he was right about one. You are very precious to me, please believe me.”

“I do, I do.”

Hannibal moves his head forward and kisses Will’s temple. Soon, they will have to go find the Council members that Verger mentioned. Soon, they will have to clean themselves and this, Verger, up. Soon, he will need to get his iron-injured wrists covered in poultices and bandaged up, so they can start their slow healing. But he pushes that all aside for a few minutes and lets himself be held.

The End

End Notes

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